

South Island Garden Spectacular



From \$5,045 per person

Wednesday 03 – Friday 12 November 2021 (10 Days)

This special interest garden tour explores the South Island to discover a treasure trove of beautiful gardens of national and regional significance – both public and private. A highlight is attending New Zealand's premier garden event; Rapaura Springs Bloom – the Garden Marlborough Festival, plus visits to Akaunui Historic House and Gardens, Trott's Gardens, and Larnach Castle whose gardens have been rated as a Garden of International Significance

Day 1 Wednesday 03 November 2021

ARRIVE WELLINGTON

Today we fly from Auckland to Wellington to commence our garden spectacular tour. On arrival in Wellington we will have a brief orientation tour of the city before checking into our hotel. The rest of the afternoon is free to explore the gardens and our capital city. We highly recommend a visit to Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum, which truly is not like any other national museum in the world. Dinner tonight is at leisure.

Accommodation: James Cook Grand Chancellor Hotel, Wellington

Day 2 Thursday 04 November 2021

WELLINGTON – BLENHEIM (BD)

This morning we board the **Interislander Ferry** and cross Cook Strait to Picton in the South Island. The last part of the cruise through the magnificent Marlborough Sounds is especially scenic. In Picton we board our coach and travel through to Blenheim, where 50 years ago there was hardly a commercial grape grown in the Blenheim area. Now the Marlborough district is the top wine producing area in New Zealand with its wines winning awards around the world. Today we visit one of the **premier wineries** of the Marlborough region to sample some of their delicious wines. We dine this evening in the hotel restaurant.

Accommodation: Marlborough Vintners Hotel, Blenheim – 2 nights

Day 3 Friday 05 November 2021

GARDEN MARLBOROUGH FESTIVAL (BLD)

Today we visit the **Rapaura Springs Garden Marlborough** event. On this day tour, we'll be taken to the paradise of Marlborough's most unique and sensational gardens, travelling along the spectacular eastern seaboard and through the valleys and plains of the Marlborough country side and into Blenheim's urban hideaways. It's not only beauty, form and colour, but energy, passion, hard work and diversity that see gardens selected for our tour. We will have a volunteer guide that will host us throughout the day. These friendly and helpful people will pass on their knowledge of the region and give background information and history on the province as we travel between the glorious gardens that make up our tour of Marlborough. A light lunch will be included today. We will be introduced to

the garden owners and they will share their wonderful gardens with us. Our day concludes with a dinner at the hotel.

Day 4 Saturday 06 November 2021

BLenheim – CHRISTCHURCH (BD)

Depart Blenheim and drive along a thin ledge of land pinned between the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean and the rugged ranges to Kaikoura, where the mountains meet the sea then travel across the farmlands of the North Canterbury Plains. Continue south where on our arrival we **enjoy the sights of the 'Garden City'**. Highlights include the River Avon, the Canterbury Museum and Arts Centre, Bridge of Remembrance, and the Spanish Mission inspired New Regent Street. Tonight we'll enjoy a group dinner at the hotel.

Accommodation: Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square, Christchurch

Day 5 Sunday 07 November 2021

CHRISTCHURCH – ASHBURTON (BLD)

After breakfast today we enjoy a guided tour of **Christchurch Botanic Gardens**, where land was first set aside in 1849. The first oak tree was planted in 1863 to mark the marriage of Edward VII and development has continued over the years, including a native New Zealand garden, the Cockayne garden of native alpine plants, the renowned central Rose Garden, extensive herbaceous borders, a floral conservatory and a fernery. More recent additions include an alpine house and a house for bromeliads and orchids. Departing Christchurch our next garden visit is **Akaunui Historic House and Gardens**. The Akaunui garden was originally designed by Alfred Buxton, established over 100 years ago. During the last 15 years major developments have taken place and the garden now covers six hectares and includes magnificent old trees (both native and exotic) and a wide variety of recently planted species. There is a pond, a creek and a bog garden, a woodland garden with a large collection of rhododendrons and associated plants; formal and less formal gardens, many roses and a productive vegetable garden. The garden complements the imposing century old double storey brick homestead. Today **enjoy lunch at the Akaunui Homestead**. On our return to Ashburton we visit **Trott's Gardens**. The woodland area was developed around a series of gently curving paths. Later the water gardens were added and finally the English inspired formal gardens. The layout is such that the garden areas are integrated yet contain elements of surprise as visitors explore. Dinner tonight is included at the hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel Ashburton, Ashburton – 1 night

Day 6 Monday 08 November 2021

ASHBURTON – DUNEDIN (B)

From Ashburton we travel down the coast through Timaru and then Temuka, which is known for its pottery and Oamaru with its lovely white stone buildings. Stop at Moeraki Boulders to see these unusual giant marble-like boulders on the beach before arriving into Dunedin, a city proud of its Scottish Heritage. On arrival, we head out to the Otago Peninsula, firstly to visit the gardens surrounding **Larnach Castle** which present a more formal aspect with an expansive lawn and symmetrically planted conifers, and you could perhaps imagine yourself at a country house in Scotland. However, just beyond the wishing well lies a rainforest garden full of unfamiliar native species: ponga, kauri, totara, rimu and cabbage trees. Our next stop is the **Glenfalloch Woodland Gardens**, situated in a coastal valley overlooking the magnificent Otago Harbour. Sheltered by a ring of pine and eucalypts, Glenfalloch features original European trees from 1872, with much underplanting. In the summer, native clematis climb the trees, with peonies and lilies flowering beneath. There is also a bush walk through ancient matai, where birdlife includes tui, bellbirds and native pigeons. We then travel back into Dunedin to settle in for the evening. Dinner tonight is at leisure.

Accommodation: Distinction Hotel, Dunedin – 1 night

Day 7 Tuesday 09 November 2021

DUNEDIN – TE ANAU (B)

Today travel through the southern suburbs of Dunedin and on to the fertile Taieri Plains where sheep and dairying are the primary industries. Travel past unique Lake Waihola and then through undulating farmland crossing the fast flowing Clutha River at Balclutha. We stop for a visit to **Maple Glen** – a 25 acre private garden, nursery, aviary, woodland and wetland set in the rolling green countryside of Southland. Maple Glen is home to a large population of native and exotic birds including hand reared parrots and waterfowl. Continue west arriving in the country town of Gore on the banks of the Mataura River for a visit to the **Gore Public Gardens**. The present design is based on the historic layout and incorporates many mature trees such as the gigantic Wellingtonia and horizontal elms planted at that time. Among the exotic trees and shrubs are a number of rare and unusual specimens including those in the extensive conifer borders. This afternoon arrive in Te Anau where the mountains of Fiordland National Park are easily seen in the distance. Dinner tonight is at leisure.

Accommodation: Distinction Luxmore Hotel, Te Anau – 1 night

Day 8 Wednesday 10 November 2021

TE ANAU – MILFORD SOUND – QUEENSTOWN (BL)

Depart Te Anau for a full day excursion travelling via Fiordland National Park to Milford Sound. Fiordland National Park, part of the Southwest New Zealand World Heritage Area is one of the great wilderness areas of the Southern Hemisphere. The scenery is spectacular with lofty mountains and deep valleys carved out by Ice Age glaciers. There are clear rushing streams and leaping waterfalls set in magnificent native rainforest. We board a comfortable vessel at Milford Sound Wharf and **cruise down the fiord past Mitre Peak** to the Tasman Sea enjoying the stunning scenery of cascading waterfalls, dense rainforest, steep cliff faces and marine life that inhabits these waters. We'll enjoy a picnic lunch while onboard. Return to Te Anau travelling via the Cleddeau Gorge, Homer Tunnel and the lovely Eglinton Valley. From Te Anau travel through the quaint settlements of Mossburn, Athol and Garston then travel along the shores of Lake Wakatipu to Queenstown. Dinner tonight is at leisure.

Accommodation: Copthorne Hotel & Resort Lakefront, Queenstown – 2 nights

Day 9 Thursday 11 November 2021

QUEENSTOWN (B)

This morning embark on a tour around Queenstown including a visit to Arrowtown – a quaint town with plenty of shops and historic remains from the Gold Rush days. The remainder of your day is at leisure to enjoy the many activities and attractions available in the area. You may wish to experience a thrilling ride on a jetboat, cruise the lake on the vintage steamer, parasail on the lake, enjoy a scenic flight over the area, join a winery tour to some of the most southern vineyards in the world, ride the aerial gondola to Bob's Peak for the panoramic view across the lake to the mountains (all at extra cost).

Day 10 Friday 12 November 2021

DEPART QUEENSTOWN (B)

Today we transfer from the hotel to Queenstown Airport for our flight to Auckland.

Go4it Travel

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